

THIRTEENTH SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM

Rotorua, New Zealand

9 – 10 August 1982

FORUM COMMUNIQUÉ

The Thirteenth South Pacific Forum was held in Rotorua, New Zealand, from 9-10 August 1982. The meeting was attended by Heads of Government from Australia, the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (as an observer), Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Tonga Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Western Samoa. Solomon Islands was represented by its Deputy Prime Minister and Papua New Guinea by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Prime Minister of New Zealand, the Rt Hon. R.D. Muldoon, chaired the meeting. The main issues discussed were as follows:

Decolonisation

The Forum adopted the following resolution:

The Thirteenth South Pacific Forum

Reaffirms its belief that the principles of self-determination and independence apply to non self-governing Pacific countries;

Acknowledges and accepts the report of the Forum Mission to France and expresses its appreciation to the President of the French Republic for having received the Delegation under the leadership of the Prime Minister of Fiji;

Takes note of recent developments within New Caledonia including the Independence Front's participation in the Council of Government, and expresses concern at the violent acts of groups opposed to reforms in the territory;

Acknowledges the efforts of the Kanak people towards the attainment of self-determination and independence of New Caledonia by peaceful means;

Welcomes the French Government's programme of reforms in New Caledonia, and expresses the hope that it will continue the reform process and give priority to declaring its intentions on the Territory's future political status;

Urges the French Government to work closely with the Kanak people of New Caledonia in formulating a political programme for a peaceful transition to independence;

Declares its continuing interest in the progress in New Caledonia and encourages the French Government to maintain dialogue with the Forum;

Decides to forward this resolution to the French President;

Decides to review developments further at the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum.

Nuclear Testing and Waste Disposal

The Forum considered the question of nuclear testing and waste disposal carefully, in the context of the development of a South Pacific Regional Environment Programme. The Forum adopted the following resolution:

The Thirteenth South Pacific Forum

Recalling its strong condemnation of France's continued nuclear weapon testing in the South Pacific and failure to provide full details of the effects of past testing activities on Pacific peoples and the environment;

Determined to prevent further exploitation of the Pacific for nuclear purposes in ways which damage the interests of the South Pacific States and the environment of the region;

Reaffirming its grave concern at the possible environmental hazards in the event of the Pacific becoming an international dumping ground for nuclear wastes;

Urges France immediately to cease its nuclear testing in the South Pacific region;

Calls on all States and especially the nuclear weapon States not to store or dump nuclear wastes in the Pacific.

Regional Transport

The Forum discussed the present financial and operating situation of the Pacific Forum Line. It also discussed the offer from the European Investment Bank for a loan for container purchase, and the associated financial package required if the loan was to be uplifted. The Forum decided that the financial package presented by the Pacific Forum Line should be accepted in total.

The amount of US\$12.6m which was required to be pledged by Forum member countries and so meet the European Investment Bank loan conditions was agreed to. The US\$12.6m was pledged by the following countries: Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Western Samoa.

This commitment will allow the Pacific Forum Line to uplift the European Investment Bank soft loan of ECU 5 million for container purchases.

The Forum discussed the civil aviation situation in the region. It agreed that a study was required to determine the requirements for the development of an effective and competitive air transport system, designed to meet the needs of Island communities and to enhance economic growth, including through tourism, air freight and internal passenger traffic.

Pacific Islands Fund

The Forum noted the proposal to establish a Pacific Islands Fund which had been examined by the pre-Forum Session of the SPEC Committee. The Forum requested SPEC to investigate anticipated funding sources and report to the Fourteenth South Pacific Forum.

Telecommunications

The Forum agreed to express to the United States Government its interest in acquiring access to a planned satellite communication system which would be launched in 1983.

Fisheries and Law of the Sea Convention

The Forum adopted the following resolution on the Law of the Sea Convention

The Thirteenth South Pacific Forum:

Expresses satisfaction at the adoption of a Convention on the Law of the Sea after years of negotiations.

Reaffirms its concern over the United States of America position on the Convention and notes with regret that the United States of America administration has now decided not to sign or become party to the Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Expresses the hope that other developed states do not adopt a similar stance to that of the United States of America.

Urges members to sign the Treaty at the Signing Conference.

The Forum adopted the following resolution on U.S. Policy on Highly Migratory Species:

The Thirteenth South Pacific Forum:

Aware of the vital importance of fisheries, comprising highly migratory species, to the Island Nations of the Pacific;

Considering that there has been virtually unanimous recognition of the sovereign rights of coastal states to exploit the resources of their fisheries zones including highly migratory species;

Mindful of the adoption, on 30 April 1982, of the International Convention of the Law of the Sea;

Noting that the United States of America, within its fisheries zone, asserts its rights over billfish, which are highly migratory species;

Bearing in mind the close co-operation in fisheries among the Forum member and observer countries, and their developing relationship in fisheries with distant water fishing nations which do recognise sovereign rights in respect of all highly migratory species.

Concerned about the serious implications of the United States policy on highly migratory species for its wider relationship with Forum member and observer countries;

Gravely concerned about the response of the United States to the actions taken by a Forum member country in protecting the resources of its fisheries zone;

Affirms the commitment of the Forum member and observer countries to develop their fisheries resources for the benefit of their peoples;

Expresses its regret that the exclusive right of Forum member and observer countries to exploit highly migratory species within their fisheries zones is not yet recognised by the United States; and

Urges the United States to revise its policy on highly migratory species.

The Forum adopted the following Resolution on the Linking of Aid to Fisheries Access Agreements:

The Thirteenth South Pacific Forum:

Aware of the importance of living marine resources to the developing Island Nations of the Pacific;

Considering it essential that these resources produce the maximum benefit for their peoples;

Noting the importance of aid for the development of their economies;

Deplores the increasing tendency of distant water fishing nations to link the grant of aid with the receipt of fisheries access; and

Declares that distant water fishing nations should not link that aid to fisheries access agreements.

The Forum agreed to the application for membership of the Forum Fisheries Agency from the Federated States of Micronesia.

The Forum noted the Report of the Director of the Forum fisheries Agency and expressed appreciation for the work of the Agency's Director and staff.

The Forum endorsed the Suva Workshop Recommendations on the Harmonisation of Fisheries Regimes and Access Arrangements.

SPARTECA

The Forum noted the report of the second meeting of the Regional Committee on Trade. The Forum was informed that Nauru had deposited an Instrument of Accession to SPARTECA with the Director a.i. of SPEC on 8 August 1982. The Forum welcomed the fact that all Forum Island countries were now members of the Agreement.

Pacific Regional Advisory Service (PRAS)

The Forum noted that the Pacific Regional Advisory Service had been established in accordance with earlier decisions under the auspices of SPEC.

Appointment of the Director of SPEC

The Forum agreed to appoint Mr Mahe Tupouniua as the new Director of SPEC.

Next Forum Session

The Forum accepted the invitation of the Prime Minister of Australia to host the next Forum with the dates to be decided after consultation with the Government of Australia.